

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 00162 071509Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
DIWY-01 IO-13 MCT-01 TRSE-00 SSM-03 /075 W
-----071542Z 104394 /65

R 071332Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4359
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 162

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG, PLO
SUBJECT: MAYOR SHAWWA'S CALL FOR GAZA CITY ELECTIONS

REF: 76 TEL AVIV 8700

SUMMARY: GAZA MAYOR RASHED SHAWWA'S REQUEST FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS SURPRISED THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, AND THEY ARE WEIGHING THE MATTER CAREFULLY. THE ISRAELIS WILL AVOID ELECTIONS UNLESS SHAWWA LOOKS LIKE A SURE WINNER, AT PRESENT AN UNCERTAIN PROSPECT. THE MAYOR SAID HE THINKS HE CAN WIN AND ASKED FOR ELECTIONS BECAUSE HE WAS FED UP AT CRITICISM THAT HE IS AN APPOINTED MAYOR, NOT AN ELECTED ONE. END SUMMARY

1. GAZA MAYOR RASHED SHAWWA SURPRISED THE HEAD OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT (GENERAL ORLY) ON DEC 28 WITH A REQUEST THAT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS BE HELD IN GAZA BY THE END
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 00162 071509Z

OF MARCH 1977 (REFTEL). THE MILGOV IS STUDYING THE MATTER CAREFULLY AND, CONTRARY TO OUR INITIAL EXPECTATION, IT NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT ANY DECISION WILL BE ANNOUNCED SOON. AN MFA OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT SHAWWA'S REQUEST MUST BE LOOKED AT BY THE ISRAELIS FROM BOTH THE JUDICIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS, MEANING THAT THEY MUST CONSIDER A) WHETHER ISRAEL, AS AN OCCUPYING

POWER, WOULD BE CHANGING THE STATUS QUO IN ANY WAY CONTRARY TO THE GENEVA CONVENTION, AND B) WHAT EFFECTS ELECTIONS MIGHT HAVE ON THE LARGER ISRAELI-ARAB EQUATION AS WELL AS ON THE LOCAL GAZA POLITICAL PICTURE.

2. A MILGOV OFFICER IN GAZA REITERATED THE SAME THEMES AND EXPANDED ON WHAT SOME OF THE ISRAELI CONSIDERATIONS MUST BE BEFORE APPROVING OR DISAPPROVING ELECTIONS. IF HELD, THE ELECTIONS PRESUMABLY WOULD HAVE TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BRITISH MANDATE LAWS WHICH WERE STILL IN EFFECT IN GAZA DURING THE PERIOD 1948-67. IN DRAWING UP ELIGIBLE VOTER LISTS, WOULD THERE BE ANY AMENDMENTS IN MANDATE LAWS, SUCH AS (FOR EXAMPLE) MAKING WOMEN ELIGIBLE? WOULD THERE NOT ALSO HAVE TO BE ELECTIONS IN KHAN YUNIS AND RAFAH? HOW WOULD THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF THE ELECTIONS BE SET UP, AND HOW MUCH TIME WOULD IT TAKE? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF MAYOR SHAWWA WON--WOULD HE BEHAVE MORE INDEPENDENTLY? AND IF THE MAYOR LOST (AS DID SHEIKH JAABARY IN HEBRON), WHAT WOULD A PRO-PLO MAYOR'S POSITION IN GAZA ENTAIL?

3. THE OFFICER SAID FIRMLY THAT ISRAEL DOES NOT WANT A PRO-PLO MAYOR IN GAZA, AND HE ASKED EMBOFF (WHO HAD EARLIER MET WITH MAYOR SHAWWA) WHAT EXPLANATION THE MAYOR HAD GIVEN FOR HIS SUDDEN CALL FOR ELECTIONS AND WHETHER SHAWWA BELIEVED HE WOULD WIN. THE OFFICER EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT GAZANS WOULD SUPPORT SHAWWA JUST BECAUSE HE HAD MADE PROGRESS IN THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT, BUT INSISTED THAT THE MILGOV HAS NOT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 00162 071509Z

ALREADY MADE ITS DETERMINATION ON ELECTIONS. "NOT EVEN MINISTER PERES KNOWS THE ANSWER YET," HE SAID.

4. ACCORDING TO THE MAYOR HIMSELF, HE CONSULTED NO ONE ABOUT HIS MOVE, HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED IT IN AMMAN ("I HAD NO POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS OF ANY KIND IN JORDAN"), AND HE HAD (CERTAINLY) NOT DISCUSSED IT WITH THE ISRAELIS. (COMMENT: SURPRISING AS IT MAY SOUND, THIS SEEMS TO BE THE TRUTH, JUDGING FROM ISRAELI BEHAVIOR AND FROM EMBOFF'S CONVERSATION WITH MOHAMMED SHAWWA, WHO BELIEVES HIS UNCLE IS MAKING A MISTAKE: "MY UNCLE DIDN'T EVEN TALK TO ME ABOUT THIS, WE NEED MORE TIME TO ORGANIZE, I DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN WIN.") THE MAYOR SAID HE WAS "FED UP" WITH PEOPLE ALWAYS SAYING THAT SHAWWA IS NOT AN ELECTED MAYOR BUT IS APPOINTED BY THE ISRAELIS. HE TOLD OF THE ABUSE POURED ON HIM BY WEST BANK MAYORS WHEN HE RAISED TAXES TO IMPLEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN GAZA; AFTERWARDS THOSE SAME MAYORS RAISED THEIR TAXES EVEN MORE, AND WERE STILL DOING LESS FOR THEIR PEOPLE THAN HE WAS FOR HIS. HE

COMPARED HIS UNPUBLICIZED DECISION TO REFUSE TO PAY VAT TAXES ASSESSED ON THE MUNICIPALITY'S USE OF ELECTRICITY ("THAT IS STILL ON ORLY'S DESK AND HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT") WITH THE WEST BANK MAYORS' LOUD BUT INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR. SHAWWA SAID THE ISRAELIS ARE HESITANT ABOUT APPROVING ELECTIONS, BUT HE BELIEVES THEY WILL EVENTUALLY DO SO AND THAT THE VOTERS WILL SUPPORT HIM AND NOT THE PRO-PLO ELEMENTS. "PEOPLE ARE LESS MISERABLE IN GAZA NOW, AND THEY DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO THE TERROR OF 1971 AND 72 (WHEN THE ISRAELIS CLEANED UP THE TERRORISTS)."

5. GAZA CITY MANAGER ISAM SHAWWA SAID THAT THE MAYOR WAS VERY IRRITATED RECENTLY BY THE WEST BANK MAYORS SIGNING A PETITION IN FAVOR OF A PALESTINIAN STATE, BUT NOT DISCUSSING THE PETITION WITH HIM BECAUSE "HE IS APPOINTED, NOT ELECTED." ISAM ADDED THAT THE MAYOR BELIEVES VOTER CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 00162 071509Z

LISTS MUST BE COMPILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH MANDATE LAW REQUIREMENTS, MEANING THAT ONLY MALES AGED 21 AND OVER WHO PAY MUNICIPAL TAXES AND WHO HAVE NOT BEEN CONVICTED WOULD BE ELIGIBLE. THUS, THERE WOULD BE 30-35,000 VOTERS, 10,000 OF WHOM ARE TECHNICALLY "REFUGEES" (BUT TAXPAYERS, HENCE ELIGIBLE). AMONG THIS GROUP, ISAM FELT THE MAYOR WOULD HAVE GOOD CHANCES.

6. COMMENT: THE MILGOV AUTHORITIES WILL APPROVE ELECTIONS ONLY IF THEY COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT SHAWWA WILL WIN, AND AT THIS POINT THEY ARE DOUBTFUL OF HIS PROSPECTS. IF THE MAYOR CANNOT BE COAXED AWAY FROM HIS PROMISE TO LEAVE OFFICE AT THE END OF MARCH, OR TO EXTEND HIS TERM, WE BELIEVE THE MILGOV WILL RELUCTANTLY AGAIN APPOINT AN ISRAELI TO ADMINISTER THE GAZA STRIP, RATHER THAN RISK AN ELECTORAL VICTORY BY "LEFTISTS" OF PRO-PLO GROUPS. RELUCTANTLY, BECAUSE AN ISRAELI ADMINISTRATOR MIGHT ATTRACT UNFAVORABLE INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION, AND WOULD BE EXPOSED AND ISOLATED IN HIS POSITION IF, AS SEEMS INEVITABLE, GAZANS REFUSED TO BE APPOINTED AGAIN TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. EVEN SO, THE ISRAELIS WOULD FIND THAT LESS UNDESIRABLE THAN THE COMPLETE DISCREDITING OF PRO-JORDAN SUPPORTERS IN GAZA THROUGH AN ELECTORAL LOSS. IT IS IRONIC THAT THE FREE ELECTIONS WHICH ISRAEL "FORCED" (MILGOV OFFICER'S WORD) ON THE WEST BANKERS HAVE GIVEN ITS MAYORS A HANDLE TO BEAT SHAWWA WITH, SO THAT HE IS NOW ASKING FOR ELECTIONS TOO. "IF HE HAD ASKED SIX OR EIGHT MONTHS AGO," SAID THE MILGOV OFFICER, "ORLY WOULD HAVE SAID YES WITHOUT THINKING. NOW, IT TAKES TIME."

7. FOR ABU DHABI: THE MAYOR SAID HE HOPES TO VISIT THE
UAE IN MARCH TO SEEK SOME FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE THE
GAZA STRIP. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ALL PREVIOUS FUND-RAISING
EFFORTS IN THE ARAB WORLD HAVE FAILED, AND WOULD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 TEL AV 00162 071509Z

APPRECIATE YOUR BEING ALERT TO ANY MENTION OF A
SHAWWA VISIT.
DUNNIGAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GAZA STRIP, MAYOR, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, LOCAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV00162
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770007-0243
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770169/aaaaciwl.tel
Line Count: 184
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 107c30dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 TEL AVIV 8700
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3638961
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAYOR SHAWWA'S CALL FOR GAZA CITY ELECTIONS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG, PLO, (SHAWWA, RASHED)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/107c30dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009